CHAPTER 6

SEEING THE FOREST FOR THE TREES: TROPICAL FORESTS, THE STATE AND VIOLENT CONFLICT IN AFRICA

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Forestry issues and opportunities should be examined in a holistic and balanced manner within the overall context of environment and development, taking into consideration the multiple functions and uses of forests, including traditional uses, and the likely economic and social stress when these uses are constrained or restricted, as well as the potential for development that sustainable forest management can offer.

——Preamble (c), Rio *Statement of Principles on Forests*

In a world of inter-connected threats and opportunities, it is in each country's self-interest that all of these challenges are addressed effectively. Hence, the cause of larger freedom can only be advanced by broad, deep and sustained global cooperation among States. The world needs strong and capable States, effective partnerships with civil society and the private sector, and agile and effective regional and global intergovernmental institutions to mobilize and coordinate collective action.

——UNDP, *In Larger Freedom*, 2005

1 INTRODUCTION

Much of the world's remaining undisturbed moist tropical rainforest is in Africa. It is home to complex, interlinked human and nonhuman forest communities, a great carbon store, and a site of enormous biodiversity. It is also threatened—by population pressure, rapacious logging companies in league with corrupt governments and other groups, and widespread violent conflict. In defense of the forest, various NGOs have demonstrated the relationship between violent conflict and deforestation. For example, Liberia's Charles Taylor used revenue from the sale of timber to directly support the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement in Sierra Leone (see Chapters 3 and 7 by de Koning and Price *et al.*). Others have followed the causal pathway in the opposite direction, suggesting that deforestation and other forms of environmental degradation lead to violent conflict (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Homer-Dixon & Blitt, 1998).

This chapter examines the connection between violent conflict and deforestation in the African context, with a particular focus on West and Central Africa. At the same

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time it examines selected recent initiatives and approaches to managing Africa's tropi-
cal forests. The chapter argues that while there are tangible impacts on the forests from
widespread violent conflict, neither forest-specific approaches nor narrowly articulated
governance interventions will make lasting, positive inroads toward forest conserva-
tion and sustainable utilization. This is because, in my view, both violent conflict and
deforestation are symptoms of broader socio-political and economic pathologies. Most
significant among these is the highly destructive interrelationship between weak African
state forms (Herbst, 2000) and a hyperliberal world order (Cox, 1996). Successfully
addressing both violent conflict and deforestation in Africa must begin by changing a
world order setting conducive to their persistence.

The chapter proceeds in six parts. The second section gives a brief description
of violent conflict in West and Central Africa. Section three provides some data on
the state of Africa's tropical forests, examines some of the economic benefits derived
from their exploitation, and describes some of the many pressures upon them. Section
four looks at three primary motivators for global intervention: biodiversity, economic
development and 'mystic space." The fifth section briefly reviews some current bilateral
and multilateral management strategies, while the sixth and final section concludes
the chapter with observations about current approaches and ideas about future policy
formation.

2 CONFLICT IN AFRICA

There has been an ebb and flow to major armed conflict in Africa in the post Cold War
period, with the number varying from 11 in 1990, to three in 1996, 11 in 1998, nine in
2000, and four at the end of 2003 (SIPRI, 2005). Just prior to the turn of the millennium,
large scale wars were being fought in or by Angola, Congo-Brazzaville (Republic of
Congo), Congo-Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC), Ethiopia, Eritrea,
Rwanda, Somalia and Sudan. Several more "low-intensity" conflicts were underway
in Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Senegal and Uganda (SIPRI, 2000). In early 2006, few
if any of these conflicts have been brought to an absolute end while new conflicts
are cropping up (e.g., Côte d'Ivoire). Where there is peace, it is tentative at best—
despite the continuing presence of UN and African Union peacekeepers, the holding of
elections, the implementation of peace accords, and the imposition of Security Council
sanctions against belligerents. Most postconflict countries return to civil or other type
of war within 5 years of the signing of ceasefire agreements.

The number of deaths directly related to these conflicts is estimated by UNICEF
to total somewhere between seven to eight million, of which two million are said to be
children. Two million people are thought to have died in Sudan's 20 year civil war, with
approximately 180,000 dead and 2 million displaced since 2003 in the Darfur region;
500,000 died during Angola's more than 25-year struggle, with millions today subject to
"excess mortality"—i.e., war-induced vulnerability to death by malaria, malnutrition,
diarrhea and respiratory infection. Eight hundred thousand died in the 1994 Rwanda
genocide, and more than 300,000 since 1993 in Burundi's civil war. Conflict in the
eastern DRC is the direct result of these events. At the end of 2004, 2.74 million of the

world's 9.2 million refugees were in Africa. Approximately 3.4 million were internally displaced at the end of 2004. Not only are these flows symbolic of regional instability; they also highlight the great pressure displaced populations place on local resources and already poor host countries—Tanzania, for example, is host to 650,000 refugees and Zambia hosts approximately 225,000.

2.1 Central Africa

Many of the states in Africa at war have been pitted against each other in what is often described as Africa's First World War, whose geographical center is the Great Lakes Region of Central Africa. During the 1998–2003 five year period two different alliances formed in the struggle for sovereign power. The Government of the DRC, itself having come to power through violent struggle in May 1997, supported by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe, was challenged by primarily two rebel factions, the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD or Congolese Rally for Democracy) and the Mouvement de Liberation Congolese (MLC or Congolese Liberation Movement), the latter a breakaway group from the RCD. Uganda and Rwanda were also active destabilizing forces in eastern DRC. The RCD, initially supported by the government of Rwanda, remains active in the "lawless east." A peace accord—the Lusaka Accord—was reached in 2003 but implementation remains problematic, partly due to ongoing rebel activity. While Botswana, Zambia and South Africa helped broker the Lusaka Accord, a joint secretariat of the UN and African Union (AU) is currently attempting to initiate an International Conference on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. Protocols and projects are being developed around four broad areas of activity: peace and security; democracy and good governance; economic development; and social humanitarian issues. An interministerial conference involving Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, DRC, Kenya, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia is slated for some time following the June 2006 DRC national elections.

Four million people are estimated to have died in the DRC conflict since 1997, leading the UNHCR to describe the situation as the world's worst humanitarian disaster in the last 60 years. Thirty eight thousand people per month are said to perish from excess mortality. Aside from formal refugees, another 800,000 are identified by UNHCR as vulnerable groups, of which 40% are children, and 49% are women. Despite the Lusaka Accord, and the presence of nearly 17,000 UN peacekeepers (through MONUC, extended to end-September 2006), vulnerable individuals "continue to perish silently in the forests."

According to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region background paper, "The Great Lakes Region has confronted Africa with a new conflict system: interstate conflicts have become the continuation or manifestation of intrastate conflicts (civil wars) by other means, namely, direct military attacks, instigation of and/or support to rebel movements in the target country, which may similarly be engaged in the exercise of destabilization by proxy. These conflicts therefore constitute a form of transnational warfare involving states as well as armed groups with cross-border ties

to states, social movements, markets, criminal cartels and even corporations." Western states, individuals and transnational corporations (TNCs) engage in formal (e.g., offshore oil, mining) or informal (e.g., blood diamonds, coltan, conflict timber) exploitation of resources in the region. They pay rents to belligerents who in turn use this income to purchase weapons. Former East European and Soviet Union countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine supply weapons either directly or indirectly through transshipment from an intermediary party. Intermediaries like Burkina Faso facilitate transshipment of weapons to Central and West African conflicts by appearing as the recipient in end user certificates though they themselves do not participate directly in the fighting. Finally, other African states like Libya and Sudan indirectly participate by training and arming rebels or by providing weapons or cash to rebel groups. One must also include the numerous gray actors in these conflicts—from mercenary groups to aid agencies, from international nongovernmental organizations to local individual fortune seekers. The array of parties actively prosecuting or benefiting from conflict and instability in DRC is truly staggering.

2.2 West Africa

In West Africa, Liberia, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire are linked geographically through the densely forested Nimba Mountains. For Paul Richards (2005), this bio-hotspot is the location for four of Africa's current or recent civil wars. Liberia's 15-year long civil war (1989–2003) spilled over to its western neighbor, Sierra Leone, in the early 1990s, and to Guinea in early 2001. These conflicts were brought to the world's attention largely through the Western media, which chose to emphasize the particularly barbaric and bizarre nature of warfare there (Ellis, 1999). While peace processes in Sierra Leone and Liberia seem to have begun to bear fruit through relatively open elections in 2003 and 2005, Côte d'Ivoire has been politically divided since 2002, with rebel groups—Forces Nouvelles—holding the north, and government forces holding the south (see Chapter 3). A 7,000 strong UN peacekeeping mission, UNOCI, has been in place since February 2004. While Ivorian President Gbagbo has been working toward national reconciliation and elections are slated for October 2006, there is little indication that north–south differences are near anything other than temporary resolution.

While the number of deaths directly attributed to the Liberian and Sierra Leonean civil wars possibly totaled less than 90,000 people (Ellis, 1999, pp. 314–316), millions suffer through inter alia infrastructure destruction (leading to loss of economic opportunity, rising levels of poverty, and vulnerability to otherwise preventable diseases), internal displacement, deliberate physical maiming by rebel groups, and HIV/AIDS. As with Tanzania and Zambia, weak West African states continue to bear the heavy burden of supporting hundreds of thousands of refugees. Although former warlord and Liberian President Charles Taylor's agreement to step aside and enter voluntary exile in Nigeria made it possible to begin postwar reconstruction, many feel that Taylor still wields great influence over the course of events in West Africa. Now that

Ellen Johnson–Sirleaf has taken power in Monrovia and Taylor has been arrested, questions are being raised regarding how to bring Taylor—charged with 17 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity—to justice without destabilizing Liberia's fragile peace. The fact that the outgoing National Transition Government of Liberia looted their offices upon leaving does not give one much hope for lasting stability in this devastated country (see www.irinnews.org/report.asp).

As with the DRC, the various conflicts that have raged over West Africa in the post-Cold War period have brought together a wide variety of very strange bedfellows: external patrons such as Libya's Gaddafi, Burkina Faso's Compaore, and Côte d'Ivoire's Boigny, before his recent death; several mercenary groups brought in to defend both companies (Executive Outcomes) and governments (Gurkha Security Guards, Executive Outcomes) and even to help with ECOMOG—the regional peacemaking body—logistics (Pacific Architects and Engineers); regional and international banks which laundered millions of dollars; TNCs involved in mining, logging, and plantation agriculture; diamond smugglers; market traders from all over the region; numerous warlords less intent on taking state power than with carving out a piece of the state for themselves; entrepreneurs within ECOMOG itself; and several regional state-makers (Babangida; Rawlings) who feared the domino effect of a Taylor-led victory in the region.

3 SOME DATA ON AFRICAN FORESTS

As this is a comparative examination of tropical forests and violent conflict, it is important at this point to change direction somewhat by constructing a landscape for these conflicts. Tropical forests have played a central role in each of the conflicts—as bases for rebel movements, as contested terrain, as sources of valuable natural resources (rubber, timber, diamonds, gold and other minerals) whose exploitation helped finance state and antistate groups alike—and these forests have, in turn, been fundamentally impacted by the prosecution of conflict. This section, therefore, presents data concerning the extent of tropical forests in West and Central Africa, the contribution of forestry to the economies—and by extension, to the conflicts—of the region, and a brief discussion of the impact of population growth, fuelwood consumption, urbanization and the expansion of agriculture on forest resources.

For some, Africa has become the last forest—environmental—global stand. According to the World Resources Institute (WRI, quoted in UNEP, 1999, p. 38), "eighty per cent of the forests that originally covered the Earth have been cleared, fragmented or otherwise degraded." What remains is "located in just a few places, mostly in the Amazon Basin, Canada, Central Africa, Southeast Asia and the Russian Federation" (UNEP, 1999, p. 38). According to UNEP (1999, p. 57),

> "The forests of Africa cover 520 million ha and constitute more than 17 per cent of the world's forests. They are largely concentrated in the tropical zones of Western and Central, Eastern and Southern Africa. With more than 109 million ha of forests, the Democratic

Table 6.1. *Land and forest area for selected Sub-Saharan African countries.*

		Forest as a percentage of total area			
Selected countries	Total land area (000 ha)	Original forest* (%)	Current forest** (%)	Frontier forest (%)	Threat to frontier forest (%)
Angola	124,670	19.8	15.3	—	—
Dem. Rep. Congo	226,705	82.5	60.4	15.6	70.4
Congo	34,150	100	67.8	28.7	64.6
Rwanda	2,467	36.1	16.1	—	—
Burundi	2,568	46.3	3.5	—	—
Uganda	19,965	70.0	4.4	—	—
Sudan	237,600	1.2	0.0	—	—
Liberia	9,632	99.6	44.2	—	—
Sierra Leone	7,162	100	9.7	—	—
Cameroon	46,540	80.4	42.4	7.9	97.4
Central African Republic	62,298	56.8	15.9	4.4	100
Equatorial Guinea	2805	95.6	38.4	—	—
Ghana	22,754	65.9	8.6	—	—
Gabon	25,767	100	90.4	32.4	100

Source: WRI, *World Resources* 2000.
*According to WRI, "original forest" is defined as that thought to exist 8,000 years ago. The quantification of this is problematic, but is used for comparative purposes.
**As a percentage of original forest.

> Republic of the Congo alone has more than 20 per cent of the region's forest cover,[1] while Northern Africa has little more than 9 per cent .... Forests include dry tropical forests in the Sahel, Eastern and Southern Africa, humid tropical forests in Western and Central Africa, diverse sub-tropical forest and woodland formations in Northern Africa and the southern tip of the continent, as well as mangroves in the coastal zones."

The WRI (2000, p. 255) identifies 31 Sub-Saharan African countries as having more than 1 million ha of tropical forest. Of these, tropical forest covers more than 50% of the DRC's surface area. The next largest forests are to be found in Angola, the Republic of Congo, Zambia, Gabon, Mozambique and Cameroon (see Table 6.1). All of these countries, save for Zambia (a former British colony), have a history of political instability, with Angola (until 2002) and the DRC involved in constant warfare since they came to independence in 1975 and 1960, respectively.

As can be seen in Table 6.1, forests throughout West Africa, save for Gabon, are badly degraded. Indeed, according to WRI (2000), whereas Sierra Leone was at one time thought to be completely forested, less than 10% of that original forest cover remains. Similarly, only 8.6% of Ghana's original forest remains. Liberia, however, has fared somewhat better, with roughly 44.2% of its original forest remaining as current forest. Among parties to the Central African conflict, areas which were fairly extensively

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[1] These numbers vary by as much as 20% depending on the source consulted.

Table 6.2. *Tropical forest area, protected area, and trade in forest products.*

Selected countries	Total area of tropical forest (000 ha)	Proportion of tropical forest protected (%)	Value of imports 1996–1998 (106 USD)	Value of forest product exports 1996–1998 (106 USD)	Export value as proportion of total exports 1997
Angola	37,564	2.6	4.6	1.2	0.02
Dem. Rep. Congoo	135,071	6.6	6.0	63.3	4.38
Congo	24,321	4.4	1.4	147.4	8.19
Rwanda	291	77	1.9	0.1	0.06
Burundi	219	18.2	2.9	0.1	0.06
Uganda	3,772	17	3.3	0.0	0.0
Sudan	12,288	12.3	34.4	0.1	0.02
Liberia	3,149	2.9	1.0	11.9	n.a.
Sierra Leone	260	20.3	2.2	0.6	0.64
Cameroon	20,009	6.0	22.5	426.6	17.46
Central African Rep.	17,101	20.1	0.2	27.2	12.75
Equitorial Guinea	1,749	0.0	1.0	56.8	13.18
Ghana	1,694	7.1	15.8	144.7	8.73
Gabon	21,481	3.6	4.3	287.6	8.73

Source: WRI (2000).

forested in the past (Angola, Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda) are badly degraded today. Only the DRC and Congo remain extensively forested (Tables 6.1 and 6.2).[2] There is very little frontier forest remaining on the continent, all of it clustered in the Central/West Africa region and all of it deemed seriously threatened (WRI, 2000). Clearly, the fact that this frontier forest exists within and between highly unstable political entities has concentrated the attention of many global actors (Shambaugh *et al.*, 2001).

3.1 War, Shadow Economies and Deforestation

As shown in Table 6.2, international trade in forest products is important for several Central and West African states, either in absolute dollar terms (Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, Ghana) or as a percentage of total exports (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Ghana, Gabon, Congo). It must be remembered that these are *recorded* exchanges. What is not captured in these figures is the production of the many illegal logging operations underway throughout the continent, many operating along semiclandestine lines similar to Charles Taylor when he was the warlord of "Greater Liberia," and that continued for 6 years during his presidency of the *de jure* Liberian

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[2] Whereas the WRI (2000) suggests that roughly 60.4% of original forest remained in 1996, a WRI-commissioned study in the Frontier Forests Initiative suggested that in 1997 86% of original forest cover remained (Wolfire *et al.*, 1998, p. 6). This wide discrepancy is common in attempts both at quantifying existing forests and establishing a benchmark from which to judge current forests with "original forest cover" (see, for example, Fairhead & Leach, 2000).

state. The following quotation is important for two reasons. One, as an example of the kinds of shadow economies existent throughout West and Central Africa today. Two, as a benchmark indicator for environmentalists everywhere who fear that management on a sustainable basis may indeed be beyond their means.

> "The Ivorian port of San Pedro boomed on exports from eastern Liberia, and its main hotel became the base for Liberian exiles, including two ex-ministers who managed their interests in the wood and rubber businesses from this Ivorian base. In 1991-2, Taylor's Greater Liberia is estimated to have produced 343 thousand cubic meters of timber which it exported to France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Greece, Portugal and Turkey. Liberia became France's third-biggest supplier of wood. Among the logging businesses operating in Liberia was a front company which, it is alleged, had close links to the Unification Church, the Moonies. Details of hardwood cargoes carried by just two ships used in the hardwood trade reveal eight shipments of logs exported from Sinoe in southeastern Liberia between December 1994 and March 1995 alone, of which four were to Bordeaux and one to Nantes, in France, and three to Leixoes, Portugal (Ellis, 1999, pp. 165–166)."

Despite the election of Africa's first female President in Liberia in November 2005, little has changed on the ground. Thousands of ex-combatants continue to mine diamonds, engage in pit-sawing activities, and move these resources across borders with impunity—despite UNMIL's mandate "to assist the transitional government in restoring proper management of natural resources" (*An Architecture of Instability*, December 2005, see www.globalwitness.org/reports/).

To be sure, the different order of things facilitated by widespread, violent conflict allows for activities at once unsustainable, unrecordable and highly profitable for those not put off by the risk. Granted, the present context tends to encourage short-term profit maximization or what might be termed fly by night or resource raiding operations. Some of these activities may in fact be sustainable, however. Duffield (2001), among others, suggests that the new medievalism of African politics encourages both long-term, low-level conflict (stalemate) and a sort of quasi-sovereign stability in the warlord zones of influence. Many of these warlords—be they holders or contesters of state-power—have created stable relationships with foreign companies in shared pursuit of their different aims.

For example, Global Witness reported in 2001 that the CEO of Danish forestry company, DLH group, was both a board member of the Liberian Forestry Development Authority (LFDA) and Director of the Royal Timber Company. During his presidency, the LFDA operated as Charles Taylor's private company and was reported to provide him with millions of dollars in nonrecorded extrabudgetary income (see *Taylor Made*, September 2001, www.globalwitness.org/reports/). Taylor used profits from the forestry industry—in the order of USD 100 million/year—to buy arms for the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone. There are indications that he and other rebel groups are still active in Liberia and may be assisting Côte d'Ivoire's Nouvelles Forces to similar ends. The Global Witness report identified France and China as major markets for round wood exports from Liberia, while the UK, Italy, Denmark and Germany purchase significant

quantities. Global Witness efforts were influential in leading to both UN Security Council sanctions on Liberian diamond exports (2001) and log exports (2004). However, a recent report (December 2005) suggests that little has changed:

> "Despite the large number of UN forces in the region … West Africa remains highly unstable. Stability in Liberia itself is only guaranteed through the presence of UNMIL, and the significant problems and failures of the ongoing DDRR [demobilize, disarm, rehabilitate, reintegrate] process in Liberia have created a large population of disgruntled ex-combatants with the capacity and will to remain mercenaries for hire (*Timber Taylor Soldier Spy*, June 2005, www.globalwitness.org/reports/)."

While Blundell (2005) argues that under UNMIL, most logging companies respect sanctions, it is clear that a weak Liberian state in combination with current instability in Côte d'Ivoire provides the perfect setting for continued illegal export of both logs and diamonds in support of various rebel movements and antistate aims.

As with Liberia, so with the DRC. There have been a large number of studies conducted into various types of resource plunder in the Congo. Some of these activities are state-sanctioned, such as the deal brokered between DRC President Laurent Kabila and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe who secured four logging concessions (in Katanga, Kasai, Bandundu and Bas-Coifo Provinces) totaling 33 million ha, or roughly 15% of the DRC, from which he hopes to eventually extract 150,000 m^3 of wood per year. Rather than a personalized agreement, this is reported to be a formal agreement between Comiex-Congo of the DRC and Osleg, a Zimbabwean registered company whose name is an acronym standing for "operation sovereign legitimacy." However, the main actors are high ranking politicians and military personnel, so pointing to personalization of state power throughout much of conflict-torn Africa (see *Mugabe's Loggers to Ravage Rainforest*, August 2001, www.globalwitness.org/reports/). In Eastern DRC, there are also many informal agreements between local authorities, rebel groups, and foreign militaries (Rwanda, Uganda) involving resource plunder, be it the open-pit mining of coltan (necessary for pinhead capacitors in mobile telephones), blood diamonds, or clear-cut logging. Observers have described this free for all as a resource curse (Bannon & Collier, 2003) whereby natural resource abundance facilitates the initiation and prolongation of conflict.

3.2 Fuel for the Fire

The forests of Central Africa cover approximately 241 million ha, accounting for 37% of Africa's total forest cover. One hundred thirty million hectare of total forest is regarded as potentially productive, while the rest is not accessible. During 1990–2000, annual forest loss was estimated to be 934,000 ha, 18% of total deforestation in Africa. Forest loss in Cameroon and the DRC accounted for 80% of this total (FAO, 2003). Despite these totals, deforestation in the conventional sense is not a major issue in Central Africa (FAO, 2003). Nevertheless, Wolfire *et al.* (1998) claim that "outside the seasonally flooded central basin, where most intact forest is located, there is increasing pressure on the resource."

Part of the pressure on land and forest resources derives from trends in population settlement and movement. In terms of local markets, both timber and nontimber forest products are extremely important throughout Africa. According to UNEP (1999, p. 38), "In Africa, where 90 percent of the population depends on firewood and other biomass for energy, the production and consumption of firewood and charcoal doubled between 1970 and 1994 and is expected to rise by another 5 per cent by 2010 . . . . The total volume of wood exploited annually in the subregion is more than 200 million cubic meters." "Nearly 90 per cent is consumed as firewood and charcoal, and only 2 per cent as industrial round wood" (UNEP 1999, pp. 57–58). In the words of Raskin and Lazarus (1989), the energy crisis in Africa, is a wood fuel crisis. Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, the continent has experienced not a shift from traditional to modern fuel sources, but backward fuel switching. As a result, demand for fuelwood is increasing in urban, peri-urban and rural areas (FAO, 2003).

To some, "fuelwood scarcity is more a consequence of deforestation than a cause" (Johnson & Chenje, 1994, p. 140). Agricultural expansion over the 1990s led to forest-to-farmland conversion in the order of 200,000 ha per year (UNEP, 1999, p. 58). It is too simplistic to say that this land conversion is a direct consequence of increasing populations needing both more food and more space to grow that food. Rather, it is more accurate to say that deforestation for agricultural expansion is a consequence of the aforementioned, plus extant and increasing inequitable land distribution. It is also a result of a need on the part of states to generate foreign exchange for debt repayment, particularly in the wake of continent-wide structural adjustment programs. Under these programs, more land has come under private leasehold arrangements, for example, large farm and plantation agriculture in Ghana and Cameroon in West Africa and Zambia and Mozambique in Central/Southern Africa. When applied in situations where existing inequalities are quite dramatic—e.g., in countries with large settler communities as in Zambia and Zimbabwe, or where the state is itself a major landholder and cash-crop producer, as in Cameroon and Malawi—land hunger is acute (see Tevera & Moyo, 2000 for an important discussion of the situation in Southern Africa). So, forestland comes under pressure both from out migration and from the more intensive use of lands bordering forested areas. Put simply, there is nowhere else for the poor and disempowered to go. Even forests that used to be managed well by local communities are now suffering under the combined pressures cited above. However, over most of West/Central Africa "the extent of sustainably managed forests is negligible" (FAO, 2003, p. 12).

3.3 Refuge and Resource

Lastly, the movement of refugees throughout Central and West Africa, particularly in the Great Lakes region following the Rwandan genocide and the continuing strife in Burundi, has led to widespread degradation of forest resources, particularly at the margins of forests and on the borders of states. Northern Malawi, northeastern Tanzania and eastern DRC have seen dramatic changes to local ecosystems as a result of the influx of sometimes more than a million refugees. Whereas degradation of forest resources

in Angola is really quite marginal, the movement of refugees in and out of northern Angola has placed considerable stress on the local environment as refugees and internally displaced people try to find space away from the belligerents. This has not only led to forest degradation but to the so-called empty forest phenomenon whereby people hunt most large mammals to extinction (e.g., for bushmeat, ivory, rhino horn). Internally displaced people and refugee demand for resources aside, the overall market for bushmeat in Central Africa is approximately 1 million tones per annum—equal to four million cattle (FAO, 2003).

4 MOTIVATORS FOR INTERVENTION

As stated at the outset, there are numerous motivators driving attempts at sustainably managing the world's forests. Here I will simply highlight three: biodiversity; economic development; and what I call mystic space.

4.1 Biodiversity

At the global level, two primary concerns with rainforest preservation are climate change and biodiversity. Most often these issues are treated within the contexts of common property resource management or global public goods, legitimating transnational interventions in the management of what are conventionally considered domestic resources. There are several problems commonly associated with global level motivators, perhaps the most salient of which is that attempts at intervention often lead to claims of Western environmental imperialism. Yet, there is no need to resort to global ethical arguments regarding preservation of biodiversity. It is increasingly clear that reduced biodiversity, especially the loss of key species, threatens the sustainability of local ecosystems. The more intact an ecosystem, the better is its resilience in the face of complex and persistent pressure. Part of the argument in support of frontier forests revolves around the importance of unbroken canopy to the stability of the entire ecosystem and its subzones.

> "Central Africa harbors unique endemism, in such areas as the interglacial refuges of the central Congo and Gabon basins, the mangroves of the Atlantic coast, the dry-forest ecozone of the Congo and Zambezi basins, and the lakes and tributaries of the Congo River" (FAO, 2003, p. 11).

The United States government, through CARPE (see below), is protecting a suite of 11 large tracts (or landscapes) of relatively intact wilderness and other areas of unique ecological importance that stretch across the entire length of the Congo Basin, from Uganda in the East to Equatorial Guinea in the West (USAID, 2005). The network of actors interested in preserving Central African rainforest is complex, ranging from a number of civil society and social movement groups (Greenpeace, WWF, Rainforest Action Network, National Geographic Society, CIFOR) to donors (e.g., the United States through USAID's Central African Regional Program for the Environment—CARPE), recipient country organizations (e.g., Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation),

IFIs (World Bank) and IGOs (UNESCO, FAO) and private sector groups (e.g., forestry companies participating in various forest certification programs; Home Depot, IKEA). Many of these are tied together through such programs as the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, the Liberian Forestry Initiative, and the Sustainable Forest Products Global Alliance. Through the Yaoundé Declaration of 1999, and the 2002 Inter-state Forestry Ministers' Working Group, Central African states have declared their intention to work collectively to sustainably manage this shared resource.

There is, however, a seeming lack of urgency. In the DRC, "most of the country's forests are currently inaccessible and of low commercial value, so the opportunity costs in conservation and taking time to plan is low" (Wolfire *et al.*, 1998, p. 9). However, according to Wolfire *et al.* (1998, p. 10), both internal and external pressures "could build rapidly." For example, while logging itself may be sustainable, access roads provide new pathways for the exploitation of nontimber species, the absence of which may ultimately undermine ecosystem stability.

The combination of extensive but weak protected area systems,[3] increased commercial logging and expanding infrastructure could prove lethal. In 1995, for example, the DRC produced 300,000 m^3 of logs of which one-third were exported and two-thirds consumed domestically. When compared with production rates in countries with much smaller forest areas but more stable polities, the untapped potential of DRC becomes clear. This explains the demonstrated interest of transnational logging companies, among them the Zimbabwe Defense Force.[4] While benign selective logging is possible, fear of widespread exploitation is not unfounded.

4.2 Economic Development

Clearly, forestry is seen to be a viable engine of economic development. In Canada, for example, the forestry industry is said to account, directly and indirectly, for one of every seventeen Canadians in formal employment. In Central Africa, there is massive scope for increased production of both timber and nontimber forest products in formal and informal, and modern and traditional sectors (FAO, 2003).

The desire on the part of central governments to enhance control over the resource base and exploit it more fully follows an obvious logic. Central/West African states are among the poorest in the world. In terms of the UNDP's Human Development Index rankings, of 174 countries, the highest ranking is Gabon at 123 with an HDI of 0.592. This last figure is only minimally above the low human development threshold of 0.500. In terms of economic growth, all of these states' formal economies continue to perform poorly. Only Equatorial Guinea has seen a high level of GNP per capita growth in the 1990s, but this is due simply to the windfall gains accruing from the recent discovery and exploitation of oil (UNDP, 2000).

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[3] In 1997, protected areas in Central Africa accounted for 36.6 million ha or 6.9% of total land area.
[4] Placing the DRC 21st in world rankings. In comparison, Cameroon produced 2.7 million cubic meters of logs and Gabon 2.1 million cubic meters, placing them sixth and eighth, respectively.

However, all of these states lack the capacity to either exploit or manage these resources effectively, let alone sustainably. Instead, they auction concessions to foreign companies from whom they derive rents. In most cases, these foreign companies are mining the forest, rather than managing it sustainably (see www.globalforestwatch.org). For example, in 1998 there were 479 logging companies registered in Cameroon. This compares with 177 in 1990 and 106 in 1980—the start of the so-called lost decade in Africa. In 1999, 84 individuals and companies held valid documented logging rights. These companies are overwhelmingly European in origin.[5] According to data provided by TREES, in the early-1990s 17.9 million ha of closed forest remained. According to the FAO, Cameroon has lost over half of its historic closed forest cover, including more than two million hectares between 1980 and 1995. Four of the 19 West and Central African deforestation hotspots as identified by TREES are in Cameroon (see www.fao.org).

Global actors recognize the desire on the part of African state-makers to exploit their forest resources, be it for personal or wider social gain. At the same time, African leaders recognize the desire of global actors to exploit the continent's forest resources. A significant challenge for those interested in conserving these resources, therefore, is to determine ways in which such actors generally uninterested in conservation or sustainable utilization can be persuaded to move toward such a position. The means by which this may be accomplished are thought to be increasingly clear—e.g., as laid out in terms of (African) Forest Law Enforcement and Governance (and Trade)—and concerted efforts have been underway since the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). However, there has been as much backsliding as there has been progress. African states uniformly face declining capacity in the public sector, generally, and in national forest agencies in particular. At the same time, TNCs are interested in the extraction of existing wealth, not necessarily in ensuring long-term sustainability. With limited state capacity to enforce laws, TNCs act with impunity. Following World Bank advice in 2002, the government of the DRC imposed a moratorium on new logging contracts. Currently 45 million ha is under contract. The government also rescinded contracts held by noncompliant concessionaires—roughly 25 million ha. According to the Bank, this was an "unprecedented move." However, it soon met with resistance:

"In 2003, interest groups began to undermine the reform strategy by taking advantage of the fragile coalition government. Reportedly, six million hectares of contracts were allocated or exchanged in spite of the moratorium, and another 2.4 million hectares that had been cancelled in 2002 were reinstated. The rules for the legal review were altered several times in successive ministerial decrees (July and November 2004, June 2005) and, contrary to what had been agreed, the legal review did not start." (World Bank, *Questions and Answers—World Bank support to sustainable management of forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo* at http://web.worldbank.org).

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[5] For example, of the top 10 companies, nine are European (five French, three Italian, one Belgian, one Lebanese). Together they are logging more than half of the forest concessions (2,035,000 ha of 4,054,000 ha).

Thus, despite growing international commitment to help African states turn forest resources toward national development, powerful vested interests—both national and foreign—within the state continue to practice resource capture for their own narrow ends.

4.3 Mystic Space

A third significant motivating factor behind sustainable conservation and management strategies is the place of forests in local and global imaginaries. Often the narratives which emerge are antagonistic, particularly where global actors (e.g., WWF, National Geographic Society) tend to conceptualize rainforests as wild, uninhabited places and local actors tend to regard them as varyingly religious, threatening, lived space, and important resource components in livelihood strategies (Alexander *et al.*, 2000). Reconciling these often contrasting perspectives is not easy. However, it is, I would argue, extremely important for global actors to move away from the pristine forest narrative if sustainable and reasonable approaches to forest conservation and management are to be achieved (for some ideas, see Fairhead & Leach, 2000).

World Resources Institute constructions illustrate the dangers inherent in conceptualizing the forest as untraversed space. In a recent publication, WRI uses two maps placed side-by-side to demonstrate the fragmentation of forests in the Congo River basin. These illustrations show the basin without (i.e., before) and with (i.e., after) roads. In their words: "road networks provide an unambiguous and easily measured, if conservative, indicator of the extent of human-induced fragmentation" (WRI, 2000, p. 94). The before picture is, quite understandably, an unbroken sea of green. The after picture is, equally understandably, replete with blue and light brown scars,[6] most notably along the banks of the Congo River. However, to assume that prior to the modern era there was only closed canopy is to render invisible the people who have historically used the forest and environs as lived space. The before picture, therefore, cannot be considered anything more than an artist's rendering; it has no basis in fact. The after picture, while accurate, is misinterpreted: what is absent is an understanding of the Congo River as the road network itself. The area deforested by infrastructure simply traces the long-established pattern of human settlement along the banks of the Congo River. Thus, people must be placed back into the rainforest picture. To fail to do so is to repeat the mistakes of the past, where conservation equaled dispossession and exclusion and led to widespread alienation from local people (see for example Schroeder, 2000).

To some extent, this is being done—particularly at regional level. For example, in the DRC's 2002 Forest Code which sets out basic principles for sound forest management, there is clear commitment to involving local people in resource use decisions and management. As highlighted by the World Bank, the major innovations of the forest

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[6]Green shaded areas connote unbroken forest blocks greater than 10,000 km^2. Blue shaded areas—denoting by far the most dramatic change from the "before" illustration—connote unbroken forested areas of 1,000–9,999 km^2. Light brown areas connote 10–999 km^2 of unbroken forest cover.

code can be summarized as follows (see, World Bank, *Questions and Answers—World Bank support to sustainable management of forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo* at http://web.worldbank.org):

- Mandatory implementation in all production forests of sustainable management plans including the protection of biodiversity, (art. 71, 99, 100).
- Preservation in all production forests of traditional users' rights, including those of indigenous people (art. 44).
- Transferal of 40% of forest area fees to decentralized administrative entities ("*Provinces*" and "*Territoires*," art. 122).
- Mandatory in-kind contributions by forest companies to rural development in neighboring villages ("*Cahiers des Charges*," art. 89).
- Direct management of forest by local communities ("*Concessions des Communautés Locales*," art. 22);
- Establishment of national and provincial forest consultative councils; various types of protected areas to total of 15% of the national territory (art. 14).
- Allocation of future logging rights through a transparent process following consultations with local communities (art. 83, 15, 84).
- Provisions for new nonextractive uses of forests and the valorization of environmental services (art. 72, 87, 96, 119).

The vast majority of international environmental NGOs continue to frame the rainforest as a pristine wilderness to be preserved, contrasting rapacious rebels and refugees with peaceful charismatic mega-fauna such as mountain gorillas (Chapin, 2004). While this may be a rhetorical ploy, such framings lead to particular policy interventions that may in fact hinder peace processes and conservation efforts rather than help them.

5 MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: SUCCESSES AND FAILURES

5.1 Mixing Global and Local

Approaches to sustainable forest management are growing increasingly sophisticated. Whereas bilateral initiatives still exist, most forest-centered economic, environmental and governance activities are multilateral in character.

In terms of bilateral, forest-specific initiatives, Canada, as a self-described world leader in the forestry industry, for example, has extended its domestic program of "working model forests" to the international level. The government did so in the wake of the 1992 Earth Summit. These model forests act as living examples of the possibilities of sustainable conservation and utilization. At the same time, Canada is working with the government of Cameroon to improve its capacity to "implement its forestry policy in the context of responsible environmental management" (see www.acdi-cida.gc.ca). At present there are two multiyear projects concentrating on the southern zone of Cameroon's forests. The stated aim of the Cameroon Environmental Protection Support project is to see that "local NGOs are trained and active with government" and

that "forest administration works in harmony with communities and the environment" (*Ibid.*). The second project, Sustainable Management of Cameroon Forests, seeks to support the forest administration with its reform process and to support Cameroon's implementation of forestry policy "in a context of responsible environmental management" (*Ibid.*).

Most OECD countries are involved in myriad multilateral initiatives that bring together research centers, private sector companies, civil society groups, community based organizations, IGOs, IFIs and states so turning discrete geographical spaces into crucibles of global political economy. These activities are set within the broad context of the Forest Principles initially hammered out at Rio whose holistic focus was reiterated at the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Ministerial Declaration and Message to the WSSD. Each of these actors brings different capabilities to programs and projects. Research centers such as CIFOR bring information to inform policy. Civil society groups act as watchdogs, independent overseers, and lobbyists whose global campaigns of naming and shaming corporate bad actors are increasingly sophisticated and effective. Donors assist with sectoral reform (based on transparency and rule of law), establishing market opportunities and guidelines (e.g., chain-of-custody from stump to export, voluntary compliance), developing smart partnerships, and building financial, infrastructural and human resource capacity. For Collier (2004, p. 11), actors need to work toward "effective global governance of the markets that have come to facilitate rebellion and corrupt governance . . . While globalization provides rebels with new opportunities, it also makes them more vulnerable to international pressure . . . provided the international community is willing to exert it."

In conflict settings such as Liberia and the DRC, forest-centered initiatives are buttressed by legal instruments such as sanctions (against blood diamonds, illegal logging, arms sales), asset freezing and restrictions on the movement of belligerents, the dispatch of UN forces (under the rubric of the Responsibility to Protect, for example) as peacemaking, keeping, and building missions, and the use of track two and three diplomacy to work toward the end of violent conflict and to minimize humanitarian disasters.

Both bilateral and multilateral approaches to forest resource management utilize integrated natural resource management approaches. For example, at the multilateral level is the USAID-supported CARPE, itself one element within a wider Congo Basin Forestry Program. CARPE draws together a wide variety of actors in the effort to preserve remnant blocks of closed canopy habitat. Those involved include the following US-based groups: African Wildlife Foundation, Biodiversity Support Programme, Conservation International, Peace Corps, Innovative Resource Management, World Conservation Society, World Resources Institute (WRI), World Wildlife Fund, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the US Department of Agriculture Forest Service, the University of Maryland's Department of Geography, and USAID. In addition, there are ten local African partners and two multilateral actors, the FAO and the World Bank. The FAO role is to develop a data system; the World Bank seeks to create a demand-driven environmental information database. Under the rubric of CARPE, the WRI, for

example, has developed its Frontier Forests Initiative, drawing into its fold a number of other partners, among them the National Geographic Society.

While many of these initiatives are well-meaning and important—especially those which seek to gather and make readily available accurate data—the majority of approaches to managing and sustaining Africa's forests are, in my estimation, both self-serving and somewhat naïve. Many of these initiatives seem preparatory: when and if there is peace, we will be ready to implement these policies. While this may seem reasonable to many, the next section seeks to demonstrate the folly of much of this activity.

6 CONCLUSIONS: SEEING THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

This chapter has described the fluid and widespread nature of violent conflict on the African continent. This conflict is primarily subnational or transnational (but not specifically interstate), diffuse and persistent. Fatalities result less from direct violence than they do from structural violence set in place by historical social relations of production made worse by post-Cold War changes to state and regional forms of authority and legitimacy (Clapham, 1996; Ellis, 1999). Characterizing Africa's forest wars as bizarre and barbaric deflects attention from the clear fact these are global conflicts conducted across a particular geographical space for many different reasons.

While forest degradation and violent conflict are linked, both of these processes have persisted through time and are neither mutually dependent nor vary directly. To suggest that they are, for instance through a resource curse narrative, ignores both African and wider world histories. Forests and forest resources have come to play a central part in post-Cold War African political economies. As formal state forms of production and authority have collapsed, shadow economies and medieval-style multiple centers of power have emerged. Global actors—from arms merchants to logging companies, from diamond dealers to *Medecins Sans Frontiers*—have reacted to the many opportunities that these new structures present. In my view, two factors facilitate the persistence of these negative processes of deforestation and violent conflict. One is the African state form; the other is the neoliberal world order. Unless these two inter-related factors are addressed, environmental degradation and violent conflict will persist.

6.1 Simulating the Westphalian State Form

The second opening epigram to this chapter from the UNDP argues that global security is dependent on strong states and strong interstate cooperation. Many observers argue that African states are weak due to their own bad governance (World Bank, 1989; 1997). While not disputing the contribution of African governments and structures of governance to current difficulties, one must remember that Africa's states, like institutions everywhere, reflect the needs of the past, not those of the present, let alone hope for the future (Dovers, 2000). These needs were born of colonial and imperial exploitation. African leaders inherited states constructed to facilitate the extraction of wealth

(slaves, minerals, animals, timber, food and cash crops) from the continent. Belgian, Portuguese and French forms of colonialism were especially pernicious in this regard (for example, see Hochschild, 1999).

Far from being any more barbaric and savage than violent conflicts anywhere else in the world, the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone are eminently understandable within the contexts of historical state formation in Africa and contemporary, post-Cold War economic decline (see, for example, Clapham, 1996; Ellis, 1999, Reno, 1999). Liberia, for example, was formed as a free territory for repatriated American slaves. These ex-slaves and their descendents came to rule a territory they rarely set foot in. With time, Liberia came to resemble a classic colony in the sense that a small core of individuals occupying a narrow strip of coastline dominated a large geographical hinterland and its many peoples. By the mid-1920s, Liberia embodied the patronage politics of a *rentier* state. In 1926, "the American rubber tycoon Harvey S. Firestone Sr., with the support of the US State Department, engineered a major business coup by signing a 99-year lease on a million acres of land in Liberia, soon to become the world's largest rubber plantation" (Ellis, 1999, p. 44). It was from this disaffected hinterland—this home turned plantation—that Charles Taylor came to draw his army. Taylor himself was born in Arthington, just northeast of the coastal capital, Monrovia, and was schooled in the U.S.

It is no surprise to say that Taylor was not the first of his kind either in Liberia or in Africa; nor will he be the last. As long as center–periphery style state forms persist, there will always be fertile ground for revolt from the margins. Moreover, given African states' general inability to penetrate much beyond the capital city (Herbst, 2000), the hinterland will regularly give rise to its own forms of power and authority. The Forces Nouvelles in northern Côte d'Ivoire are only the latest in a long line of such revolutionary movements. To survive in a post-Cold War era, rebel groups "irrespective of the motivation for the rebellion . . . must also become a business organization" (Collier, 2004, p. 3). Where easily exploitable, highly portable and globally valuable resources such as alluvial diamonds are available, it seems not unreasonable to conclude that central states may never gain control of their hinterlands (Parker *et al.*, 2004). The presence of ideologues such as Libya's Gaddafi only adds to the unstable mix.

It is no accident that the zones of violent conflict on the continent tend to correspond to those areas dominated by these three former colonial masters. These states have been variously described as weak, predatory and patrimonial—all quite accurate in my estimation (see Bayart, 1995). Policies which work through these states overestimate their capacity to ever approximate their Western counterparts—they are fundamentally different; they were created for fundamentally different purposes. In many ways, then, reform is simulation, rather than real reform and it will last only so long as donor funds are available. Moreover, as Ferguson (1990) so aptly demonstrated in the case of World Bank projects in Lesotho, local actors operate in local contexts. This means that any funds or other forms of support from outside the local will be twisted to fit the local context. Projects therefore do not fail—they achieve very specific locally-determined ends. These are ends which may be very different from those desired by donors, however.

6.2 Liberal Peace Liberal War

Duffield (2001) argues that the attempted construction of a neoliberal world order has given form to very specific kinds of warfare, a liberal war where globalization and structural adjustment have combined to undermine existing social orders within states narrowly articulated with global capitalism. Whatever positive activities are undertaken in the name of resource conservation, they are ultimately undermined by economic structural adjustment conditionalities and weak state debt burdens. Among other factors, country-specific liberalization and deregulation have led to a decline in the global price of timber products, as producers flood world markets (FAO, 2003). Privatization has further undermined authority and legitimacy in highly-contested state forms, so encouraging the rise of warlordism (Greenpeace International, 2005a).

While the political cross conditionality of first-past-the-post elections may satisfy donor criteria for openness, it simply rearranges the power political deck chairs once every 4 years so leading to a cycle of kleptocracy and retribution. As a sign of good faith to citizens and donors alike, Liberia's President Johnson–Sirleaf sacked her entire Ministry of Finance in a high-profile crackdown on corruption. Observers would be wise to remember, however, that similar actions were taken in Kenya, Malawi and Zambia following deposition of dictators—all countries currently embroiled in comprehensive corruption scandals. Greenpeace (2005b), for one, has begun to explore the links between World Trade Organization rules and forest loss; but formal donor policies are all underpinned by firm commitments to neoliberal globalization. Given African weak state forms, neoliberal globalization fosters resource capture rather than creates the basis for sustainable resource management (Homer-Dixon, 1999). Put differently, Western actors deliberately focus on the fragile and stunted African state tree, without acknowledging that it exists in a wider forest of economic globalization.

6.3 Policy Implications

There are a number of very clear policy implications to arise from this overview and critique. I will, however, limit myself to three of what I consider to be the most important.

First, there is an abiding difficulty particularly in the social and policy sciences with reconciling macro- frameworks with micro- realities. While it may be essential to contemplate global governance of the world's "lungs," attempts to prevent exploitation of these resources by local peoples without addressing the underlying basis of the poverty and desperation that drives some of them to ransack their own source of livelihood will fail (Dalby, 2002). Similarly, to assume that one policy fits all—i.e., economic structural adjustment and multiparty elections—is to ignore the realities of people on the ground. Despite policy pronouncements regarding local stakeholder participation, transparency and accountability, there is no empirical evidence to suggest willingness by governments in West and Central Africa to relinquish power, either over an essential resource or over people. As recent experience with attempts at water reforms and community based natural resource management programs in Southern Africa show, powerful people tend to manipulate any intervention from outside to their own advantage (Alexander

& McGregor, 2000; Twyman, 1998; Swatuk, 2005). In the context of shrinking formal economies and often disintegrating polities, this is to be expected.

Those truly interested in conservation alone would do well to recognize that state makers, rebels and warlords only understand the hard bargaining of threat and compromise. No amount of soft talk about reform and democratization will change this fact. Saving the rainforest may require some serious trade-offs along the lines of the 1980s debt/environment swaps—irrespective of the regime in power and its behavior.[7] Placed in this context, recent Conservation International ideas to buy closed canopy forest seem rational rather than bizarre. Accompanying this must be strong OECD pressure for formal regulation of forestry TNCs—such companies will only respond to concerted international legal action. But as long as countries such as France and Italy resist compliance (as a market for conflict timber) or enforcement (of their own TNCs), the free for all across African forests will continue.

Second, sustainable forest management is not a sectoral activity that is fungible in global space and time. Rather, it is a site-specific developmental activity that seeks either to change the way people live their lives, or to assist them to maintain their current lifestyles while adopting more sustainable practices. Both ways are highly political acts and resistance—either from the communities in question or the central state or both— should be expected. Understanding the context for sustainable forestry management may therefore require anthropologists, not economists.

In this regard, donor and multilateral activities focusing on community forestry management projects in concert with land reform and more productive forms of food production are to be encouraged. In a difficult socio-political situation, however, by-passing the state to work directly with communities may be problematic both for the donor and for the local community. Yet donors have dollar power which should be exercised with caution. Unfortunately, the overwhelming preoccupation with structural adjustment programs and possible debt forgiveness in exchange for harsh political and economic reforms is the wrong kind of dollar power. It is no accident that those states most readily pursuing structural adjustment programs—e.g., Cameroon and Ghana— have witnessed the most widespread degradation to their forests. Liberalization in the context of debt destroys forests; it does not preserve them. Sustainable forest management may thus begin with debt forgiveness, strong market regulation, and increased access for African textiles and cash crops to Western markets.

Lastly, the weak African state form, articulated marginally into global capitalism,[8] and dominated by particular ethnic and class groups encourages an ongoing cycle of

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[7] If you balked at this point, it should then give you pause to consider both your own motives and the consequences of your actions. West and Central African state-society relations are highly volatile. Relations between "governors" and "governed" are by no means settled or peaceful. To interact with and enact policies through elites will have very specific effects at mass level. How important is conservation for its own sake in the presence of such social relations? Indeed, is "conservation" here anything more than a ritualized enactment of what you would like it to be, rather than what it in fact is?

[8] Bannon and Collier's work on resource dependence and the need for economic diversification is important in this regard: enclave and/or rentier economies will become more unstable in the absence of deepening capitalist development and job creation.

resource degradation (be it formal, such as oil in Angola and Nigeria or informal such as coltan in the eastern DRC) and political instability. For Homer-Dixon and Blitt (1998, pp. 1–2), environmental scarcity is a consequence of the depletion of renewable resources such as forests, soil, lake and river water and the stratospheric ozone layer. They provide both goods (fish, plants, water) and services (fertile soil within which plants root and grow, carbon stores, pollution filters), with numerous linkages.

Scarcity, Homer-Dixon states, can come about in one of three ways: as a result of increased demand (demand-induced); as a result of decreased supply (supply-induced); or as a result of unequal access to and distribution of these resources (structural). These push and pull factors are said to often coexist. In the event of scarcity, two processes are set under way. Resource capture takes place by those with the means to do so, while those without are ecologically marginalized.

Resource capture and ecological marginalization are rife throughout the West/Central African landscape. The rainforests are part of this landscape, as sites of struggle and sources of friction, as providers of both global and local goods and services, as a thing and a social process, at once material and ever-changing. To "save" the rainforest begins with putting it back into the landscape, and locating this particular landscape in wider, equally complex and confounding constructed realities. Extracting "deforestation" from these wider processes and structures and relocating it within a narrow—and narrowly state-centric—discourse of violent conflict and environmental scarcity, however, is a temptation to be resisted. Acknowledging and articulating the interrelationship between violent conflicts, resource degradation, weak states and neoliberal globalization is a step in the right direction. Greenpeace, among others, has taken this step; OECD donor states have not.

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